

Sally was the first tropical cyclone to develop to typhoon intensity in the month of December since Pamela in 1966. She was also the first tropical cyclone of typhoon intensity, since before 1945, to transit the Gulf of Thailand.

Sally crossed the Sulu Sea on 29 November as a depression in the equatorial trough. Satellite pictures indicated increased organization as she entered the southern portion of the South China Sea. Continuing her low-latitude track, Sally came under the influence of an anticyclone centered south of Hainan Island and was forced equatorward late on the 30th.

Reconnaissance aircraft arrived in the area on the morning of 1 December. A small circular eye of 5 nm in diameter with a partially-formed wall cloud was located. The central pressure was 989 mb and flight level (700 mb) winds were 55 kt in the northeast quadrant. The Japanese ship, TAGAMARU, passed 50 nm northeast of the center (01/1200 GMT). She observed 60-kt winds from the south and a minimum pressure of 992.5 mb.

Attaining typhoon strength, Sally tracked westward, passing the southern tip

of Vietnam on the evening of the 2nd (Figure 3-36) and reaching her peak intensity of 80 kt. Sally's track across the Gulf of Thailand on 3-4 December followed the periphery of an irregularly-shaped mid-tropospheric ridge which dominated the synoptic pattern over the Indo-China peninsula.

Late on the 3rd, Sally fell below typhoon strength, continuing to weaken slowly before striking the coast of Thailand on the morning of the 5th. She moved ashore south of Chumphon and crossed the Malaya peninsula at 10°N. Moving over the Andaman Sea that evening, Sally never regained her former intensity and slowly dissipated during the next two days.

Sally brought heavy rains to Thailand, flooding Chumphon and several surrounding provinces (Figure 4-36). Agricultural crops were damaged, hundreds of houses were destroyed, and thousands of coconut trees were uprooted. Twenty trawlers on Samuni and Phangan islands off the coast from Surat Thani were sunk. In the aftermath of Sally, 11 persons were reported killed and five missing.

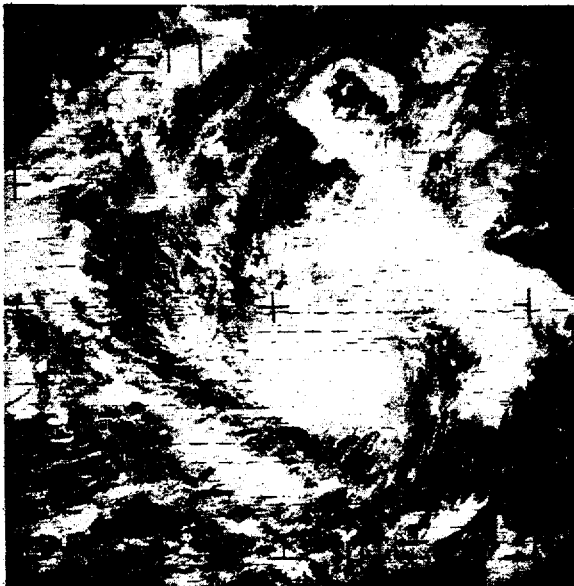


FIGURE 4-36. Typhoon Sally off the southern coast of Vietnam, 2 December 1972, 0316 GMT, ESSA-8 satellite.--Courtesy of Royal Observatory, Hong Kong



FIGURE 4-37. Floodwaters in the coastal town Chumphon, Thailand, resulting from the torrential rains of Sally.--Courtesy of Bangkok Post